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Financial Aid Makes Illinois Wesleyan Opportunities Possible

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – In a state where funding for public higher education continues to be uncertain, independent universities such as Illinois Wesleyan University are more affordable options than families might think. When Meri Brown of Chicago was searching for colleges, she was focused on leaving Illinois for large schools in neighboring states.

"I was considering Mizzou and Wisconsin-Milwaukee for location, size and affordability," she recalled. "At the time, I wanted the big-school atmosphere."

After a [visit](#) to Illinois Wesleyan, however, Brown fell in love with the campus culture and people. "I was introduced to current students, and they seemed to genuinely love it here and all the school had to offer," she said. "The campus environment was so welcoming and felt like home."

Brown also began to realize that a smaller school would be a better fit for her. And even though the big state schools would be less expensive after all financial aid was considered, Brown believed a degree from Illinois Wesleyan would have higher value. "I felt that Illinois Wesleyan would provide me with greater opportunities in the long run," she said.



Meri Brown



The Summer Enrichment Program (SEP), which includes a paid internship, has been a formative experience for Meri Brown (far right), pictured with SEP classmate Emani Johnson (center) and Kylie Stamm, then assistant director of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

Those opportunities extend both in and out of the classroom. "The staff and faculty have helped me so much in my experience here," said Brown. "My professors often talk to me about my future goals and what I need to do to achieve them. The Hart Career Center staff has directed many opportunities to me in regard to my major, which is accounting. And the [Office of Diversity and Inclusion](#) has worked closely with me to provide an inclusive environment and offer the opportunity to participate in the [Summer Enrichment Program](#). I am forever grateful to all of them for their help."

That help covers financial assistance as well. Like more than 90 percent of Illinois Wesleyan's student body, Brown receives financial aid. "The work that IWU's [Financial Aid](#) staff does for the students here is remarkable," she said. "I am in awe of how well the Financial Aid staff caters to the students. I have heard my friends at other schools tell me how they are always frustrated with their school's financial aid department. Here, I have gone into the Financial Aid office on many occasions worried, and I have always left feeling more relieved because of their guidance. They are very attentive and extend as many resources as they can to students."

A helpful, caring, student-centered college experience is not inexpensive. But when financial aid enters into the equation, an

Illinois Wesleyan education is within reach of any student.

"If I had gone anywhere else, I would not have met the people here who mean the most to me," said Brown. "Because of its small size and the campus environment, I've made a family at Illinois Wesleyan. And the great financial aid package I received made that possible."